CONSIDERATIONS

CONCERNING

PEACE.

BY A FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE,

CAMBRIDGE.

MY THOUGHTS, I MUST CONFESS, ARE TURNED ON PEACE:
ALREADY HAVE OUR QUARRELS FILLED THE WORLD
WITH WIDOWS AND WITH ORPHANS! CATO.

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WHILE the warm partizans of our preſent Miniſter worſhip him as a ſuperiour impeccable being; and while the friends of Oppoſition ſeem unwilling to allow him a common ſhare of conduct and of virtue;—a calm diſintereſted obſerver may, perhaps, between the two opinions, form a juſt idea of this illuſtrious man.

His brilliant talents and learned acquirements, no one dare diſpute: of his private virtues, the world can judge little; but, as the keen eye of envy has not been able to diſcover any prominent vices, we may juſtly deduce that he is a moral good man.

He is neither avaricious nor extravagant —neither a debauchee nor a gameſter; he ſeems, indeed, to have but one paſſion, and that ſo natural and ſo common to all great men, that it can hardly be called an imperfection; I allude to his ambition—or, in other words, his love of power and his love of fame.

If, then, it could be proved to Mr. Pitt, that his power and his fame depended on a ſpeedy peace with France, I think it would be the moſt probable means of producing that happy event.—For this purpoſe, therefore, I take the liberty of addreſſing a few pages to the people of Great Britain—to point out to ſuch of them as agree with me in wiſhing for peace, by what ſteps I conceive it may be procured.

The majority, which Government at preſent commands in the Houſe of Commons, are, in my humble opinion, of little compa-

rative value, even in the eyes of the Miniſter himſelf.—The herd of courtiers and placemen, which the ſtability of every Government requires to be under the immediate influence of the exiſting ruler, are attached —not to Mr. Pitt, but—to the Chancellor of the Exchequer: theſe men are leſs actuated by gratitude than by intereſt;—

Diffugiunt, codis cum fæce ſiccatis, amici.
HOR.

But it is in the body of the Nation, that the firm foundation of our Premier's power is rooted: In every county, in every town, a great majority admire and ſupport him: I have little doubt from my own experience, that the free uncorrupted ſuffrage of a great majority of both rich and poor is in his favour; they ſubmit cheerfully to the preſſure of the taxes; and though individually they feel the calamities of the war in which we are engaged, yet they continue to ſupport it, becauſe they have a confidence unlimited in the virtue and wiſdom of Mr. Pitt.

It has ſo ſeldom happened, in the hiſtory of this country, that the ſame Miniſter has concluded a war which he had himſelf begun, that many people conceive it impoſſible: thus, then, they are reduced to a dilemma; while they wiſh moſt anxiouſly for peace, they fear to expreſs their ſentiments, leſt they hazard the ſituation of their favourite Miniſter.

The ground of this difficulty is, however, abſurd: no real cauſe can be ſhewn why Mr. Pitt may not make the peace, as well as Mr. Fox, or any other man, (not excepting Lord Landſdowne): and I am ſatisfied he would offer immediate overtures to France, if he were convinced that a conſiderable majority of the people of Great Britain anxiouſly deſired it—knowing, as he does, how much his power depends on their ſupport, his love of power would oblige him to attend to the wiſhes of his ſupporters.

His conduct indeed in 1797 and 1798, when Lord Malmſbury went twice to Paris, is a proof of what I advance: for Miniſters, in a late celebrated debate, aſſert, that contrary to their own ideas of propriety,—and no doubt contrary to their own immediate intereſt, ſince their power and influence is always increaſed by war,—they made thoſe rejected overtures to France, in compliance with what they underſtood to be the general wiſh of the Britiſh Nation.

I exhort, then, every man, who is anxious to put an end to this ſad warfare, to come forward on the preſent occaſion: Let meetings be legally aſſembled; let addreſſes be mildly and reſpectfully preſented to our beloved Monarch: in ſhort, let the real ſentiments of the nation be expreſſed upon the queſtion of peace or war.—The Miniſter *muſt* obey.—Oppoſition may complain that the Conſtitution is overturned; the ambitious enemies to order may lament the

wiſe reſtrictions of law, and endeavour to perſuade us that the people have loſt all ſhare in the preſent Government:—I am ſatisfied, on the contrary, that our liberties remain unimpaired; and that no Miniſter, who values his fame or his power, will venture long to oppoſe the plainly-expreſſed wiſhes of the majority of the people, —ſuppoſing that majority to contain its proportion of men of property and men of ſenſe.

It will, perhaps, be urged, that addreſſes of this kind can be of no uſe, ſince Mr. Pitt is individually deſirous of peace, and already anxious to find an opportunity of concluding it.—This I beg leave to doubt. The individual intereſt of every Miniſter inclines him to war: the number of contracts, of promotions, of extraordinary ſituations of advantage, which a war enables him to diſpoſe of, makes him ever averſe to peace. —The very increaſe of taxes increaſe the

influence of Government:—add to which, that in every victory ſome ſhare of glory attaches to the planner of the expedition; while failures are uſually imputed to the agents.—A war, likewiſe, enables the Miniſter of this country to interfere with, probably to direct, moſt of the Cabinets in Europe.—Thus then we ſee that every ambitious Miniſter delights in war; as it opens the wideſt field for his extenſive abilities.—The peaceful ruler of a happy nation would attract but little the obſervation of mankind, ſtill leſs the envied attention of the hiſtorian.

That Mr. Pitt, then, is diſinclined to peace, may, I think, be reaſonably ſuppoſed; but, it may again be ſaid—If he were ever ſo deſirous, or if the voice of the nation obliged him to offer negociation, we have little chance of ſucceſs, while our enemies are under their preſent form of Government.

Much eloquence has, no doubt, been already employed in debating on this ſubject, in both Houſes of Parliament; to the inattention of newſpaper editors, I impute the want of argument, which I have lamented in the long ſpeeches that have been given to the public.

The Oppoſition have never ſufficiently preſſed the *ability of France to make and to maintain a ſound and laſting peace*; and the Miniſter, who would not openly avow his reſolution of continuing at war, till the houſe of Bourbon ſhould be reſtored, (which ſeems however to be his real intention) waſted his own eloquence and the patience of his hearers upon a forgotten pamphlet concerning the *origin* of the war; a book, whoſe thirty editions have probably long ago deſcended to the family vault of the Capulets. When a man has a violent cough, it is not neceſſary to

aſcertain how he caught the cold, but how he may get rid of it.

Mr. Pitt was not ignorant that Mr. Erſkine's pamphlet was irrelevant to the preſent queſtion; but it was neceſſary he ſhould take ſome part in that great debate, yet he wiſhed not to commit himſelf to any ſpecific line of conduct, that he might ſtill be at liberty to take the beſt advantage of the enſuing campaign. I do not preſume to blame him,—he is alike above my cenſure and my praiſe; I wiſh only to deduce, that Mr. Pitt was himſelf diſinclined to enter into the ſimple queſtion which ought to have been diſcuſſed, *of the ability of France, under its preſent Government, to make and to maintain a laſting peace with this country*. As I am myſelf ſatisfied ſhe is able ſo to do, and as I think the overtures of Buonaparte ought not to have been rejected, I beg leave to offer my reaſons.

In the hiſtory of all wars, we find but two cauſes of peace; either, the mutual intereſt of both parties; or, that one ſide having completely triumphed over the other, having gained poſſeſſion of its fortreſſes, broken its ſpirit by victories, or exhauſted all its reſources, the victor proudly dictates the terms of peace to his vanquiſhed and ſubmiſſive foe. This latter, I think, can never be the caſe between France and England; it is never reaſonably to be expected; it is, perhaps, not reaſonably to be wiſhed. The mutual intereſt then, of both parties, is the only probable cauſe of a peace with France.

That the real intereſt of our adverſary prompts her at this moment to peace, can hardly be doubted. After a vaſt profuſion of blood and treaſure from external war, and more baneful internal maſſacre, nothing but her invincible pride induces her to ſupport this arduous conteſt. She cannot—

no independent nation can—ſubmit to have a form of government dictated to her by foreigners, particularly by enemies.

Fallen indeed, muſt be the proud glory of France! if, while one of her ſons is capable of bearing arms, ſhe liſtens to ſuch propoſals:—but, if terms were offered neither contrary to her dignity nor her independence, who can doubt, that—bleeding at every pore, and exhauſted by ſo long a ſtruggle—ſhe would gladly reſt in repoſe.

Thoſe, then, who join with me in thinking that *our* domeſtic ſorrows make peace likewiſe deſirable to this country, will agree that, at this moment, the mutual intereſt of both parties ſhould lead us to an immediate negociation.

Let us then conſider, whether it is likely that ſuch a peace would be of long duration; or rather, (for it is the ſame thing),

what probability is there of another war? —The power or pride of a nation, the ambition of its rulers, and the temptations of probable ſucceſs, are, I imagine, the only cauſes of war, at leaſt of aggreſſion.—Pretexts are never wanting, either between Crowned Heads or Republican Governors. —Whether a man rules a nation by hereditary right, as Louis XIV; by uſurpation, as Cromwell; or by pretended popular election, as Buonaparte; he is never at a loſs for a pretext to make war, whenever his intereſt or his ambition, his power or his pride, prompt him to ſuch a meaſure.—Republican France is, in this reſpect, the ſame as France governed by Bourbons.—The only queſtion then at iſſue will be,—not indeed ſtrictly, whether theſe cauſes will act ſooner or more frequently upon a Conſul than a King, but—whether, under her preſent Government, ſhe is *capable* of maintaining peace and amity, and *likely* ſo to do; or, whether the cauſes I have mentioned

will *conſtantly* incline her democratic Rulers to war with Great Britain?

Let us ſuppoſe then, that a peace was once eſtabliſhed.—I can ſcarcely pretend to propheſy what form of government France would aſſume: whether the dominion of Buonaparte would be permanent, is a matter of doubt—I think it improbable; whether other Conſuls, other democratic tyrants, would ſucceed him and rule their hour, is equally uncertain.

I am inclined to hope, that, tired of the confuſion and miſeries which have attended her republican adminiſtrations, and which even peace would not entirely do away, France would recal her ancient line of Sovereigns.—It is at this moment, I am ſatisfied, her earneſt wiſh; but ſhe is reſtrained by commendable pride.

Though I confeſs the event is doubtful,

yet I muſt contend that the very inſecurity of her preſent Government, and the probable changes which may be expected, will be a ſecurity for the peace which I am anxious to have concluded.

An abſolute and haughty monarch, who can command his ſubjects to follow him to the field whenever it pleaſes himſelf, has nothing but his own pleaſures to conſult; whereas the popular leader of a nation, who owes his inſecure dominion either to uſurpation or election

——qui ſumit aut ponit ſecures,
Arbitrio popularis auræ—

if he wiſhes to continue his ſhort-lived power, muſt, in ſome meaſure, conſult the real wiſhes of the people,—muſt avoid ſuch meaſures as would irritate the minds of all againſt him. What conſul, then—what democratic ruler, would dare to propoſe a

renewal of the war with Great Britain?—Were peace once eſtabliſhed in France, would not her manufactures revive?—would not her commerce once more flouriſh?—would not her population gradually be reſtored.—Is there a nation in the world, on which peace would have ſo immediate and ſo pleaſing an effect?—would not its grateful influence be immediately felt by every claſs of men?—How then could a ruler, whoſe power depended ſo much on his popularity, propoſe for many years to renew this deſtructive to France, this unuſually deſtructive war?

Let it not be urged, that theſe bleſſings to France would be evils to her rival: ſuch arguments are always unchriſtian, and have been well ſhewn by the author of *The Wealth of Nations* to be impolitic.

It is then, I preſume, probable, that the intereſt of France, and therefore of her de-

mocratic rulers, would lead her to keep peace if it were once made. That ſhe is able ſo to do, her conduct towards Pruſſia will evince.—She *has* maintained a long peace with the Monarch of that country: ſhe has courted him with every mark of affectionate friendſhip:—and why? becauſe it was her intereſt ſo to do:—It will more palpably be her intereſt to act the ſame towards us, and therefore ſhe will do it. I may be told indeed, by a ſupporter of the war—that a democratic form of Government can never long exiſt in a vaſt empire, during a perfect peace with the reſt of the world; that the variety of ambitious individuals, who would ſtart up and claim a ſhare of power, would throw the nation into perpetual tumults; and that nothing but the common cauſe of external war will quell theſe rebellious ſpirits, and induce them to ſubmit to a regular Government:—That, therefore, it will not be for the *intereſt* of that ſet of men, who happen to

be at the head of affairs, to continue at peace with foreign nations. This argument, I confeſs, has conſiderable weight againſt the probability of any popular leader *making* a peace, and inclines me to ſuſpect the ſincerity of Buonaparte's profeſſions: but, if a peace were once made—

This circumſtance convinces me that, conſidering France as our enemy, we ſhould gain as much, nay more, by peace than war; indeed, I think it likely to effect the real object of the war,—the reſtitution of the Bourbon Family. But if democracy ſtill continue ſucceſsful in that devoted country, and if it be really thought that war will be neceſſary to the ruling government, though contrary to the wiſhes of the people; yet, it by no means follows that they would war with us. Some other mode would be found of employing her arms—ſome other common cauſe would

eaſily be ſuggeſted by her rulers, where the tempting proſpect of ſucceſs would be greater, than in a deſperate attack on this all-powerful country. France eaſily found pretexts and political reaſons for attacking Switzerland and Rome, while ſhe bowed to the commands of Pruſſia.

This proves (my opponent might urge) the neceſſity of our continuing armed—of our continuing, as it were, at war, though in the midſt of peace.

In ſome reſpects, the objection is juſt:—'Till France is more ſettled—'till the extraordinary agitation ſhe has ſuffered has more ſubſided,—'till her government aſſumes more the appearance of permanency, we cannot reſt in abſolute peace: our uſual peace eſtabliſhment will not be ſufficient to guard us againſt the poſſible deſigns of our adverſaries.

Though three parts of the annual expenſes occaſioned by the war may be laid aſide, one quarter may ſtill perhaps be neceſſary. It would, I am well aware, be highly imprudant to lay aſide our vigilance, and even ſome part of our expenſes, 'till the ſtorm upon the continent has more completely ceaſed.

But this objection, though ſtrong, muſt be, in my opinion, eternal.—When can it ceaſe to be urged?——Will it not be equally unanſwerable at the beginning of another century? 'Till when, then, are we to fight?—'Till the government of Buonaparte has ſubſiſted ſome given time? He will not *then* ceaſe to be our enemy—he will not ceaſe to be ambitious—he will be no ways different from what he is now: nor can we be ſure, that, though his power ſubſiſt through ten years of war, that therefore it will ſubſiſt through *one* year of peace.

Are we to fight, then, 'till ſome other uſurper takes, in his turn, the reins of government?—What difference would this make, in our relative ſituations?

Muſt we fight, then, 'till France is entirely vanquiſhed—'till ſhe accept a Royal Family from the hands of her victors?—This ſurely can never be? I tremble at the thought of the many lives that would be ſacrificed to ſuch an attempt. But, ſuppoſe it ſucceſsful,—would the people of France, thus vanquiſhed, thus exhauſted, have any love, any attachment to monarchs ſo conſtituted?—Would not Engliſh or Ruſſian guards be neceſſary for ſuch a King? Would the French Nation in a body be leſs inclined, and in a few years leſs able, to make war with this country?—Could we reaſonably diſarm, and ſleep in profound peace?—I am ſatisfied, if this bloody conteſt ſhould terminate agreeably

to the proudeſt wiſhes of our Miniſter, our ſituation would be no more ſecure, than if a peace were made this moment with Buonaparte.—

'Tis time to ſheathe the ſword, and ſpare mankind!

But Buonaparte, in his offers, was poſſibly inſincere: he wiſhed only to gain time; —he intended not to make peace, but to ſeparate the Ruſſians from the coalition.

I am not aware that he would have gained any time, by our agreeing to a congreſs. No armiſtice was requeſted; and none would, of courſe, be granted.—Lord Malmſbury's negociations neither interrupted the active ſucceſſes of our fleets, nor the preparations of our armies.

It would be highly beneficial to Mr. Pitt, and ſatisfactory to the nation, if he would prove the inſincerity of our adverſary by

meeting his advances. Were we once convinced that our enemies *will not* make make peace, we *muſt* ſubmit to war. But at preſent, when an offer has been ſo proudly rejected by Great Britain, ſhe has no right to make ſuch an accuſation againſt her opponent.

Whether the Ruſſians will, or will not, join us again, is a matter of very little conſequence to the preſent queſtion.—Coalitions of ſeparate powers upon ſeparate intereſts, are never likely to hold long together. Auſtria will perhaps deſert us next. —Whether ſhe is or is not likely ſo to do, I am not now conſidering; nor do I much care: Great Britain and France are ſtill ſtrong enough to lacerate and torment each other: our reſources are perhaps ſtill unimpaired, (the late Loan is a convincing proof of it); her's are ſtill prodigious.— This dreadful conteſt may continue for

ages yet to come, before either party is completely exhauſted. When we were unſucceſsful, France refuſed our overtures; when God gave us the victory, we refuſed her's.—

Furorne cæcus, an rapit vis acrior?
An culpa?

One other argument remains to be conſidered:—It has often been urged, that the extenſion of Jacobin principles might be the conſequence of a peace. This country has, I truſt, ſufficiently ſhewn its real loyalty, to anſwer this objection.—The number of volunteer corps would continue to guard us in the moſt ſecure and unexceptionable manner.

But, it may be ſaid, if a communication were opened with France, our travellers thither may perhaps imbibe an inclination for licentious liberty. While tyranny triumphed there, did ever any of our

courtiers return from Paris with a love of abſolute power? they felt the inconveniences attending it, and returned home more pleaſed with their own conſtitution.

Some years ago, the novelty of Jacobiniſm, the glare of equality, attracted the attention of the idle and the admiration of the diſcontented; but the horrors, which have attended the experiment in France, have opened the eyes of all people in this country;—the hopes of Britiſh traitors have long ſince ceaſed.

That the diſbanding of our troops—the turning wild upon the country a lawleſs number of unreſtrained ſailors and others, whoſe immediate employment may be hurtful to ſociety;—that this neceſſary conſequence of peace would require more than uſual vigilance in our police, is certain,—ſome partial inconvenience might attend it:—But this is not peculiar to the preſent

moment.—As before, if we attend to this, the war muſt be eternal.

I think my opinion, with regard to the propriety of making overtures for peace, coincides with that of a great majority of the nation.

Many people, I am ſatisfied, would come forward and avow the ſame ſentiments, were they not fearful of offending the preſent adminiſtration.

Let me exhort them to conſider the ſuperior duties they owe to humanity, to their families, and I may add, to their God—We read perpetually in our daily papers of dreadful conflicts between the contending powers: Ten thouſand Auſtrians are one day left upon the field of battle—on another, twelve thouſand Frenchmen are deprived of life—Many millions, I may aſſert, have been ſacrificed to this war.

In the late expedition to Holland, we loſt not quite 1000 men.—All you, who had children, brothers, or any dear relations killed on that occaſion, are fit judges of the miſeries of war.—You who were not ſo nearly wounded, might ſtill obſerve the acute ſuſpenſe and agoniſing impatience which was viſible in every face, to know how their friends had eſcaped the ſlaughter of thoſe ſorrowful battles! In this expedition, we loſt not quite 1000 men:—eſtimate, then, the horrors which muſt attend the deſtruction of millions! Though they are ſtrangers which have fallen; though many of them are enemies;—they are ſtill your fellow-creatures.

Let me exhort you, then, by every tie of humanity and religion, to endeavour to put a ſtop to this moſt lamentable carnage.—Addreſs, with decorum and humility,

our juſtly-beloved Monarch—he lives but for the good of his people :—

> Their filial love
> And confidence are his unfailing treaſury;
> And ev'ry honeſt man his faithful guard!
>
> THOMSON.

To make ſuch ſubjects happy, muſt be his conſtant wiſh:—inform him how much your inclinations are fixed on peace;—believe me, he will liſten to your ſolicitations—his Miniſter *muſt* obey them.—Though the immediate intereſt of Mr. Pitt (as I have endeavoured to ſhew) induces him to continue the war; his power and his good name depend ſo much on your good opinion, that this ſuperior intereſt will make him ever attend to your deſires, when once they are clearly known.

Let me obſerve in concluſion, that all thoſe who oppoſe the addreſſes which may be offered to our gracious Sovereign, pray-

ing for peace, ſhould fairly conſider themſelves as really inſtrumental to the deaths of all thoſe poor men, who either hired from other monarchs, (who can ſhameleſly barter *men* for *money*!) or willingly fighting from love of our own, may fall in the enſuing campaign.

To men immerſed in the buſineſs and employments of this world,—who have no relations engaged in military profeſſions, and have little feeling for the diſtreſſes of foreigners or enemies,—the benefit of peace appears only conſiderable, as it may add to their own domeſtic comfort, diminiſh their private burthens; or, in ſhort, affect the ſmall ſociety in which they move. —To ſuch men, I would fain urge the following conſiderations.

Large collections of men, either in fleets, armies, or garriſons, (which muſt ever be

the caſe in war,) are allowed to conſume, or rather waſte, a greater quantity of proviſions and other ſtores, than if they were at home with their families, individually intereſted in frugality.—This circumſtance, then, not only increaſes the want of proviſions in our country, but more materially affects the Continent: and, as all Europe begins to feel the conſequences of ſo long a war in the vaſt conſumption of proviſions, we have a great difficulty in procuring foreign ſupply to alleviate the diſtreſſes which our late bad harveſt has occaſioned.—I do not then, aſſert, that the war is the abſolute cauſe of the preſent ſcarcity; but I am ſatisfied it adds to its internal preſſure, and prevents much our receiving relief from abroad.

The great extenſion of our commerce, —the boaſted advantage which we perhaps have gained by the diſtreſs of our adver-

ſary—while it enables our merchants to pay the high price of inſurance, &c. increaſes itſelf, in conjunction with the war, the high price of commodities, and makes money of leſs value—While then our rich men grow many of them *very* rich,—our poor are *ſadly* poor.—The ſituation of our laborious and virtuous country poor is diſtreſſing to humanity: the war adds in many ways to their miſery.

But there is one other circumſtance which I think ſhould have conſiderable weight on all thoſe who value the happineſs of their country and of mankind. —Nothing produces *immorality* among the lower claſs of people, ſo much as war.

Men, collected together in ſhips, in barracks, or in any other large bodies, while the greater part of their time is ſpent in idleneſs, will become more and more

vicious, in proportion to the length of time they remain together.—Such is human nature! While the men are thus drawn away from their wives or ſweethearts, the women thus deſerted, uſually go upon the town. Our ſtreets are filled with impurity, our villages are deſerted: Both men and women loſe all reliſh for domeſtic happineſs,—one principal ſource of moral virtue, of national happineſs, and indeed of national ſecurity. The war, then, if long continued, may perhaps produce the very evil it is intended to prevent—By it, immorality is increaſed among the lower order of ſociety,—and *Immorality* is the foſtering parent of *Jacobiniſm.*

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